

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 15th October 2018

Present: Cllr Lythgoe (Chair)
Cllrs Janet Eaton, Essex, Fletcher, Gill, Johnson, Kempson,
Morris and Serridge
Zieda Ali, Co-opted Member

In attendance: Sam Plum, Director of Communities
Mick Coogan, Strategic Housing Manager
Mike Atherton, Planning & Building Control Manager
Jenni Cook, Committee & Member Services Officer

Also Present: Cllrs Ashworth, Cheetham, Haworth, Lamb and Walmsley
0 press
2 public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from:

- Councillor L. Barnes – Councillor Essex substituting
- Councillor Procter – Councillor Fletcher substituting
- Councillor Robertson – Councillor Serridge substituting
- Councillor Kenyon – Mayoral duties

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2018 be approved as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 During Item 8 (The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2018-23), Councillor Essex declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a Trustee of Rossendale and Hyndburn Citizens Advice.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

4.1 The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items of business.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

6.1 The Chair noted that he would allow questions to be asked on each item as it was discussed.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

- 6.1 The Chair confirmed that the 101 Service had not responded to the Committee Officer's requests for attendance so had not been included on the October agenda. The Officer would continue to ask them to the November meeting.
- 6.2 The Chair confirmed that the East Lancs CCG have now postponed the Birthing Centre item until 'after Christmas'. This had also been posted at LCC's scrutiny committee. The CCG had been given the meeting dates for January, February and March.
- 6.3 Task and Finish Group Suggestion
Following a notice of motion at Full Council in September, it had been suggested that a Task and Finish Group be set up to look at child poverty. Discussion took place on this item with age ranges and period poverty being noted.

Resolved:

That a Task and Finish Group is set up.

7. PLANNING SERVICE UPDATE

- 7.1 The Planning and Building Control Manager provided members with an update on the planning services as follows:-
- Development Management: Planning performance (in terms of number of applications determined within the statutory period) for the second quarter of 2018 was summarised:
Majors: 100% Target: 65%
Minors: 98% Target: 80%
Others: 97% Target: 80%
 - This represented a high level of performance, significantly in excess of targets and was due to the hard work of the team.
 - Planning Policy Update: the consultation on the Draft Local Plan expired on 5th October 2018 with between 400 – 500 responses to work through before the Draft Plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (February 2019). The 'Examination In Public' will follow this and is likely to be in late Spring/Summer next 2019.
 - Staffing Update: Following the departure of a member of the Planning Policy team in October; his replacement has been recruited and will start in January 2019. An advertisement will go out shortly for a Lead Enforcement Officer, which is currently being covered on a temporary basis.
- 7.2 Comments were made on the report and queries were answered as follows:-
- The number of weeks to process planning applications was clarified (major – 13 weeks and minor – 8 weeks).

- An update was given on Horncliffe House, building inspections and the officer would pick up a specific issue raised by a member.
- The officer clarified the housing requirements within the Core Strategy and would circulate some information to members after the meeting to assist.
- Retrospective planning applications were discussed and it was noted that these were guided by legislation and the planning policy framework. A proactive approach was in place.
- The Planning Team were thanked for their hard work.

Resolved:

1. The update was noted.

8. THE PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND REVIEW 2018-23

8.1 The Strategic Housing Manager introduced the Strategy and took members through the main points as follows:-

- The strategy and review are both statutory and are required to be published for the service to be legally compliant. The strategy is based on the findings of the review, which looks at related data and trends, as well as and additional duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act and challenges due to policy and welfare reform changes.
- Relevant tables and statistics were highlighted as the officer took members through the document, including house prices/affordability, mortgage repossessions, rental repossessions, homelessness decisions and outcomes, causes including domestic abuse, and changes in priority need households with mental health problems highlighted as on the increase.
- Preventions and reliefs were looked at including methods, with B-with-us lets being the most frequent.
- The 2007 policy review was noted, with 14 out of 19 actions completed.
- The success factors were detailed along with the priorities that had been formulated.
- Members were taken through the Action Plan which set out all the teams which would contribute to implementation of the policy. Consultation had taken place on the policy and, however the response had been quite low.

8.2 Members and members of the public commented on the report as follows:-

- The strategy and review was an excellent document. An executive summary would be added to the beginning of the document.
- Some minor typos were noted and a review date was required on the front of the document
- Social housing needs and the work of the council and RTB Board was discussed.
- Good/bad landlords were discussed and a possible forum was in the pipeline.
- The impact of Universal Credit (UC) was discussed and it was thought that this would have an impact on the service. Members were reminded that there was a member briefing regarding UC on 17th October 2018.

- The expense of credit checks carried out by private letting agents was discussed and was thought that the Tennant Fees Bill would mitigate this issue.
- Budget information was not included in the policy but was available via the relevant budget documents.
- The equality impact assessment and carers/veterans was discussed. The Officer noted that the council only collated information from service users that they were statutorily required to.
- The officer clarified the input that Strategic Housing had into the planning process.
- The Planning and Building Control Manager clarified the planning matter raised by a member of the public.
- Staffing and resources was discussed and the Officer clarified the statutory duty for zero degree conditions.
- The Housing Options Team was thanked for their hard work and commitment to the important service they provided.

Resolved:

1. That the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2018-2021, along with the appendices, is recommended for approval to Cabinet.
2. That an executive summary would be added to the beginning of the document, along with the review date.
3. That all future minor amendments are delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

9. THE FORWARD PLAN

- 9.1 The Committee and Member Services Officer noted that there were no changes to the Forward Plan since the September meeting.

The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 7.45pm